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Message Text

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73
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-04 SAM-01 DRC-01 /059 W
---------- 128359
R 151557Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 779
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12398

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS SOCI LE
SUBJ: MOB VIOLENCE IN SOUTH LEBANESE TOWN OF BINT JBEIL

REF: BEIRUT 12177

1. ON OCT 13, ESTIMATED 5,000 VILLAGERS IN BORDER DISTRICT OF SOUTH-CENTRAL LEBANON--ANGERED BY GOL FAILURE TO PROVIDE BOTH BETTER PROTECTION AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS AND ADEQUATE SOCIAL SERVICES--RAN AMUCK FOR SEVERAL HOURS IN MAIN DISTRICT TOWN OF BINT JBEIL (3307N-3526E). MANY HAD ASSEMBLED INTIIALLY AT VILLAGE OF BLIDA, 6 KMS. EAST OF BINT JBEIL, TO COMMEMORATE DEATHS OF FOUR PERSONS THERE AS RESULT OF IDF BOMBARDMENT OCT 5 (REFTEL). HOWEVER, FOLLOWING STRIDENT HARANGUES BY VARIOUS LEFTIST ORATORS, DEMONSTRATION ASSUMED INCREASINGLY UGLY AND ANTI-GOL TONE. BRUSHING ASIDE EFFORTS BY HANDFUL OF GENDARMES TO RESTORE ORDER, MOB MARCHED ON BINT JBEIL WHERE IT SACKED BUILDING CONTAINING DISTRICT GOVT OFFICES AND NEARBY GENDARMERIE HQS., DISARMED AND "MOLESTED" LOCAL POLICEMEN, BURNED POLICE VEHICLES, TORE UP LEBANESE FLAG AND TRAMPLED PORTRAIT OF PRES FRANGIE IN DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. ONLY AFTER ARRIVAL OF ARMORED
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UNITS FROM LEBANESE ARMY WAS CROWD FINALLY FORCED TO DISPERSE.

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2. COMMENT: WE HAVE LONG BEEN REPORTING EFFORTS BY VARIOUS LEFTIST GROUPS, ESPECIALLY COMMUNISTS AND PRO-IRAQI BAATHISTS, TO CAPITALIZE ON GOL'S ABYSMAL NEGLECT OF SOUTH LEBANON AND ON GROWING DISSATISFACTION ON PART OF THAT AREA'S POPULATION IN ORDER TO FOMENT SOCIAL UNREST AND THEREBY FURTHER THEIR OWN POLITICAL AMBITIONS. GOVERNOR OF SOUTH LEBANON HAS CONFIRMED TO US THAT COMMUNISTS TOOK LEAD IN ORGANIZING AND DIRECTING BINT JBEIL INCIDENT. HOWEVER, MOB'S ANGER AND RESENTMENT WERE GENUINE AND DEEP-SEATED, AND REQUIRED NO GREAT STIMULATION TO EXPLODE. ALTHOUGH IT TOOK PLACE AT TIME WHEN LEFTIST GROUPS ARE ACTIVELY OPPOSING SAEB SALAM'S EFFORTS TO FORM NEW CABINET, THIS INCIDENT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS SYMPTOMATIC OF GROWING DOMESTIC ILLS THAT WILL CONTINUE TO PLAGUE GOL IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE (BEIRUT 11970). INFLUENTIAL SHITTE IMAM MUSA AS SADR--AS PART OF HIS CONTUING CRUSADE ON BEHALF OF HIS DOWN-TRODDEN SOUTHERN FOLLOWERS--RECENTLY WARNED THAT SALAM'S FUTURE GOVT MAY BE LAST CHANCE FOR REFORM BEFORE SOUTH LEBANON TURNS TO "REVOLUTION". LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN BINT JBEIL WOULD APPEAR TO ADD WEIGHT TO HIS WARNING.
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